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NEWSLETTER

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By Yoshinobu Nagamine
Head of Office

Dear readers,

The Arab Spring is nearing the next spring after having gone through other seasons. The armed conflict in Syria is being fought with increasing intensity putting a heavy burden on the civilian population trapped in the fighting. The secretary-general of the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) was recently killed in January 2012 while traveling in a car clearly marked with the Red Crescent emblem. There are currently only a limited number of doctors working in the still functioning hospitals in areas affected by the violence: health-care workers fled due to insecurity and patients are too scared to be arrested at the hospital. The staff are increasingly under direct or indirect threat at times when health service is needed the most.

The ICRC is currently in contact with all parties to the conflict and has called for at least two hours of cease-fire to step up humanitarian assistance to people in need. Since 11 February, the ICRC and the SARC managed to enter the cities of Homs, Hama, Idlib, Dara'a and rural Damascus to provide assistance.

In February 2012, ICRC Director of Operations, Pierre Krähenbühl came to Japan as part of

the annual strategic dialogue with Japan. In a press conference held at the Japan National Press Club, he first expressed condolence to the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake as well as the admiration for the swift reconstruction effort. He then thanked the Japanese government for the political and financial support (CHF 48 million) despite the difficult times in which Japan finds itself after the earthquake. "The record number of Japanese delegates (currently at 18) can be seen as an increasing level of interest and ownership in the institution."

This year will also be a special one for Japan since it hosts for the first time the annual Donor Support Group Meeting in May 2012 where the 18 top donors for the ICRC come together to discuss the most urgent policy issues. The President of the ICRC, Jakob Kellenberger will also come to Japan for this occasion and hold talks with senior Japanese officials.

The top 10 countries in which the ICRC works in 2012 are Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, Israel and the occupied territories, Yemen, Colombia and South Sudan. Japan has been assisting many of these countries for a long time and as a coincidence, more than half of the Japanese staff abroad work in one of these countries. One of them is our communication officer who is on three-month mission in South Sudan from the end of January 2012. We are looking forward to reporting to you what our staff experienced in the field.

Damascus neighborhood, Al-Zahirah, Syria. Basement of an under-construction hospital turn into an emergency operations centre. Two volunteers from the SARC take care of a patient.

World Field News

Cyprus

During its session of 22 to 23 February 2012, the ICRC recognised the Cyprus Red Cross Society as the 188th National Society of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Syria

On 7 March 2012, a joint team from the ICRC and the SARC finally entered the district of Baba Amr in Homs. The team is to continue evacuating the wounded, the seriously ill and the dead and providing food and other basic items for people in areas affected by the violence.

Mali

As the situation worsens in the Sahel, the ICRC is appealing for CHF12.3 million in order to bring aid to some 700,000 people in Mali and Niger and thereby help forestall a major humanitarian crisis in the two countries.

Colombia

On 6 March, 11 employees from a petroleum company were handed over by members of the Frente Domingo Laín unit of the National Liberation Army to the ICRC, representatives of the Catholic Church and the ombudsman.



ICRC

Interview: A Japanese Delegate in the Field

As of March 2012, 15 Japanese delegates are working in conflict areas in the world. One of our delegates dealing with life on the front line talked about her experience working with the ICRC.



Mariko Harada

Several years of experience working in humanitarian and development field before joining the ICRC in November 2010. Completed her 1st mission in Thailand and will start working in Mindanao, the Philippines in mid-March 2012.

Q. Can you tell us about your work in Thailand?

The ICRC has been working in South Thailand since 2005 due to ongoing violence and unrest in the Muslim majority areas. Our main task was to visit those arrested and detained in relation to security incidents especially under the existing Martial Law and Emergency Decree. We, as the ICRC does elsewhere in the world, spoke to concerned individuals in private, worked with the authorities to ensure humane treatment of detainees and to improve conditions of detentions as needed. We also followed up on possible civilian protection cases, but immediate needs were addressed by the support of the authorities in most cases. Therefore we focused more on addressing medium to longer term impacts and rehabilitating their livelihood by providing productive goods and services.

Q. What did you find most challenging in your work in Thailand?

Many people may wonder why the ICRC works in a place like Thailand. Indeed, it is not the most typical context that the ICRC works. What the ICRC could do from its mandate,



The ICRC assisted detainees with necessities at the time of Thailand flood in 2011.

fundamental values and available expertise and resources, seemed often rather limited. It was naturally frustrating to many of us in the subdelegation.

Q. What stands out in your memory from your experience in Thailand?

An unknown and low intensity of situation of violence has been part of peoples' daily life in South Thailand. My work was most of the time 'unglamorous' and maybe non-newsworthy but of course many people left impressions on me, generously sharing with me their thoughts about their life and struggles and what they wished for their family in the future. I think it is a humbling experience to be able to assist their effort to restore their ability to help themselves and therefore their dignity. We have this lady in her 20's who started a sewing business with support from the ICRC. She now manages to raise a little child herself while her husband has been detained for a

prolonged period. She never felt at ease as her husband's cases were still in court, but at least she did not have to worry about supporting her family any longer. I was touched by many individuals I met through my work with the ICRC last year; they stayed strong and tried their best in a difficult situation.

Q. What do you think makes the ICRC unique compared to other organisations?

The ICRC has access to many places and people, which other organisations might not. Even in South Thailand, we were the only international organisation that had a permanent presence. I also think the fact that the ICRC, keeping its neutrality, works with different stakeholders and delivers its assistance directly by itself strictly based on the needs of the affected, makes the organisation somewhat different from others. I think having personnel with different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds might have an advantage for the organisation. In dealing with different interlocutors and stakeholders, say, promoting international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, it might help reminding those that these are not Western rules and values but are universal that they are obliged to respect.



Supported by the ICRC, Harina (centre), whose husband has been detained, started a sewing business.



Harina gave a dress she made to Ms. Harada as a farewell present.

Historical Relationship between Japan and the ICRC

A new historical series about Japan-ICRC relationship

Promotion of the Peacetime Activities

In 1919, after World War 1, the Red Cross activities took a different turn. The importance of peacetime activities was emphasised in the Covenant of the League of Nations, which was a component of the Treaty of Versailles. These new activities were increasingly focused on in line with the need for medical services for injured soldiers and the epidemic in countries devastated by the World War. In particular, the Spanish Cold pandemic, a kind of influenza, that had killed 4,000 to 5,000 people and Typhus, which spread amongst injured soldiers, were seen as two key reasons.

Establishment of the League of the Red Cross Societies

At the same time, the League of the Red Cross Societies was established as an organisation to coordinate all Red Cross Societies. The League expressed its mission to embark on activities to promote health, prevent diseases and relieve pain throughout the world, which further promoted the Red Cross activities in peacetime.

Key Japanese Contribution in the Establishment of the League

Prior to the establishment of the League, five Red Cross Societies from US, UK, France, Italy and Japan held a conference at Cannes in France. It is not well known but one of the participants, Dr. Arata Ninagawa, from the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) played a vital role to promote the Red Cross's peacetime activities and then establish the League.

Dr. Ninagawa had visited Red Cross Societies in Europe and the ICRC, as a part of the Japanese Red Cross mission in 1918. In a meeting with the minister of the Home Affairs in Switzerland and at a dinner hosted by the ICRC, he advocated that the Red Cross should work also in

peacetime and the Geneva Conventions should be modified for that purpose. His idea was that "The Red Cross should cooperate each other to relieve people's pain and eliminate injustice". Ms. Cramer, a member of the ICRC, then sent a letter to Dr. Ninagawa saying the ICRC had increased its interests in peacetime activities and had considered conducting research into peacetime activities thanks to his advocacy. Later, Dr. Ninagawa wrote a document for "The Red Cross Magazine" as requested by the ICRC.



Dr. Ninagawa (left) and other members of the research committee for the establishment of the League.

These efforts coupled with Dr Ninagawa's advocacy for the need for peacetime activities led the Red Cross to increase its peacetime activities and to establish the League. "The World's Health", a monthly magazine of the League of the Red Cross, records that "We must not forget that the first specific idea for establishing the League came from Japan".

Peacetime Activities in Japan

As the League was established, new activities such as "Mother and Child Health Care" and "Red Cross Youth" started worldwide and these also influenced the activities of the JRCS. In Nagasaki and Hyogo, midwives visited mothers with financial difficulties and helped with the birth of their children at no cost. Healthcare centres were also established in several areas and medical examinations and consultation for children under 7 were provided for free of charge.

The "Red Cross Youth" began as an initiative by the Canadian Red Cross Society in 1914 during the World War 1. It began by registering boys

who then participated in producing medical dressing that were used in the battlefields of Europe. This then spread to the US when they entered the war in 1917 and the Red Cross Youth expanded the range of its activities to support many other Red Cross activities. After the World War 1, the Red Cross Youth started supporting war orphans. They sent gifts and letters to orphans and this led to increased cultural exchanges between children all over the world. For the purpose of peacekeeping and cultivating future Red Cross human resources, this idea was spread worldwide – that every country should have its own Red Cross Youth.

This worldwide trend reached Japan and the Red Cross Youth activities began in earnest. At the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, they took part in providing food and water and delivering daily supplies to people affected by the earthquake. The Japanese Red Cross Youth members also had international exchange programmes and exchanged gifts such as albums and dolls with 30 countries across Europe, Asia and South America. In the Matsue chapter in the western part of the country, they held an exhibition of gifts from foreign countries. According to the records, the children were thrilled with the gifts from the US, which had been sent as Christmas presents.

End



JRCS conducted medical examinations for children.

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1863	Establishment of the International Committee for the Relief of the Wounded	1877	The battles of the Southwestern Rebellion	1937	Sino-Japanese War
1864	Signing of the first Geneva Convention		Establishment of the Philanthropic Society in Japan	1939	World War 2
1867	The first Red Cross International Conference	1886	Signing of Japan to the second Geneva Convention	1941	The Pacific War
	Paris World Expo	1887	Renamed JRCS	1942	Establishment of the representative office of the ICRC in Japan
1871	Iwakura Mission		JRCS recognised as a National Society by the ICRC	1945	Atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
1873	Vienna World Expo	1894	Japanese-Sino War		End of the World War 2
	Meeting of Iwakura Mission and Moynier, the Chairman of the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded	1904	Japanese-Russo War	1949	Establishment of the four Geneva Conventions
1876	Renamed to the International Committee of the Red Cross	1914	World War 1	1953	Accession of Japan to the four Geneva Conventions
		1919	Establishment of the IFRC	1977	Establishment of the two Additional Protocols
		1920	Three JRCS nurses receive a prize of the Nightingale Medal	2004	Accession of Japan to the two Additional Protocols
		1931	Manchurian Incident	2009	Establishment of the ICRC Tokyo Office

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

IHL Penetrating into the Students

Victor Delnore, a Colonel of the US Occupation Forces, came to Nagasaki and saw for himself the devastation right after the atomic bombing. Struggling with his position as a Colonel, he committed to appeal the terribleness of the effects caused by the atomic bomb to the world, such as giving his permission to the Nagasaki City to hold the 1st Peace Memorial Ceremony. Featuring his actions, students in two schools explored "humanitarian activities."



The Yoshijima students showed around the Peace Memorial Park to the Momonoki-dai elementary school students.



Megumi Nagata

All the 75 students of 6th graders performed in the play.

In 2009, the Japanese Red Cross Society (JRCS) hosted a seminar for teachers focusing on EHL. Following the seminar, one of the participants, Mr. Tamura, ran a research project on Col. Delnore with his 1st and 2nd grade students at Yoshijima junior high school in Hiroshima city. Later, Ms. Nagata from the Momonoki-dai elementary school in Osaka learnt about the project and also started EHL activities featuring Col. Delnore at her school.

When the 6th graders of the elementary school visited Hiroshima as a school trip, the Yoshijima students showed them around the Peace Memorial Park and the Museum. The Momonoki-dai students continued to research

Col. Delnore when they returned and learnt more about preservation of human dignity. Finally, they staged a play centred around the atomic bomb, Col. Delnore and the educational exchange with the Yoshijima students. A student comments "Through performing the play, I realised how important it is to keep appealing to the future generations not to use atomic bomb, which causes a great number of deaths."

EHL (Exploring Humanitarian Law)

EHL is an International Humanitarian Law (IHL) education programme for young people between ages 13 to 18.

Updates from ICRC Tokyo

100th Anniversary of the Empress Shoken Fund Empress Shoken and the Red Cross Exhibition



Empress Shoken in Western style dress, setting the standards for a new era of Japanese women.

Empress Shoken (Empress of the Meiji Emperor) made an effort to promote education and charities in her lifetime. She showed great interest particularly in the humanitarian activities of the Red Cross. When the Bandai Mountain erupted in 1888, she asked the JRCS to send doctors to the devastated areas to treat and rescue the victims.

"Empress Shoken Fund" was created in 1912 with a donation of JPY 100,000 (equivalent to CHF 3.8 million at the present time) that was granted by the Japanese Empress Shoken for Red Cross's peacetime activities. Some CHF 12.6 million has been used so far for disaster prevention, sanitation and blood transfusion in over 157 countries and areas. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Fund, an exhibition will showcase Empress Shoken's precious artifacts and document the history of pioneering humanitarian and supporting activities since 1912.

Date : 26 March to 28 May, 2012
Time : 9:00am to 4:30pm
Place : Treasure Museum Annex, Meiji Shrine
Admission : Free
Organizer : JRCS, ICRC, IFRC
Support : Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mainichi Newspaper
Cooperation : Meiji Shrine

Workshop "Journalists and the IHL"

On 15 February 2012, the ICRC held a workshop in Tokyo for journalists who report from the conflict areas. Professor Tadao Inoue from the JRC Akita College of Nursing presented a session detailing the legal status of journalists under the IHL.

Attacks on civilians are prohibited under the IHL. Prof. Inoue started off by explaining that journalists are civilians and should not be attacked or detained. He also explained that journalists are at risk being mistaken for spies in certain contexts. As a means to protect journalists in case of being captured, detained or missing, he introduced ID cards issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and ICRC's "Hotline for journalists", which is available not only to the journalists but also to their families and the organisations to which they belong.

The participants raised various questions such as status of journalists entering a country without clarifying their professional purpose and then being detained or the legal interpretation regarding attacks on broadcast stations. Prof. Inoue explained that the journalists should not be attacked as long as they are not directly participating in hostilities, while broadcast stations could be justified targets depending on the role they are playing, thus the matter of attacks on broadcast stations is sensitive and cannot be generalised.



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